



*Supporting landholders
with native vegetation*



The Bundian Way by John Blay

Eden Local Aboriginal Land Council has recently mapped one of the old routes or highways used by Aboriginal people to travel between the mountains and the coast.

The aim is to have the route recognised with heritage protection and to manage it for educational and tourism purposes. This would open the way for a greater understanding of Aboriginal cultural heritage and Aboriginal approaches to land management. It would also add to our knowledge of the history of this area and to our appreciation of its natural values.

The Bundian Way is a pathway between Targangal (Kosciuszko) and Bilgalera (Fisheries Beach on the southern side of Tulemulerer (Twofold Bay)). It connects the highest part of the continent and the coast via an ancient Aboriginal route that brought together the people of the greater region, most notably for ceremonies associated with whaling in springtime at Twofold Bay and moth hunting in the high country during summer. Of all the routes in the network of old ways that lead from the coast to the high country, the Bundian Way is the best preserved, with a considerable part away from made roads and the remainder following trails and minor country roads.

On its way to the coast the Bundian Way crosses the Snowy River and passes through some of the wildest, most rugged and beautiful country in Australia. It travels through Delegate and the village of Towamba, finishing near Boydtown on Twofold Bay. The route passes a multitude of localities highly significant to the Aboriginal community. In many parts the



Photos: John Blay

Old hatchets are not uncommon along the Bundian Way. Some are beautifully worked. All artefacts should be left where they are found.

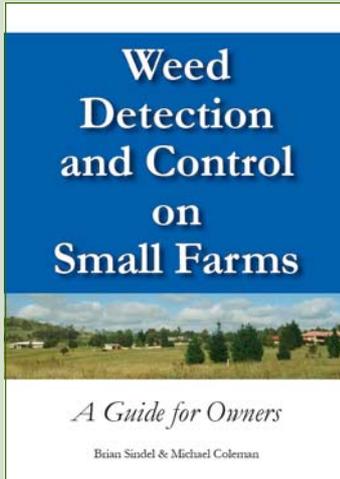
influence of Aboriginal land management is still obvious. For example, at Merambego, on the eastern edge of Kosciuszko National Park, fire and the results of Aboriginal burning are evident in its grasslands and grassy woodlands.

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New publication



Download at:
www.ruralfutures.une.edu.au/downloads/SmallFarmWeeds_400.pdf

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Coordinator's column

We've survived the August winds and snow at 700m. With winter nearly over, spring flowers are blooming, frosts are close to finishing and Swift parrots are beginning their return journey to Tasmania.

What strikes me when looking through this edition is how much goes on in this shire, from bird watching and cultural heritage mapping to Seedbank and Landcare activities, not to mention wildlife monitoring with the CMN.

The next workshop is on managing grassy woodlands with fire, led by Jackie Miles. The site is the Bemboka river reserve, a beautiful example of



Clematis aristata

Photo: Karen Walker

lowland grassy woodland which will undergo a burn six weeks before our visit. Jackie will cover why and how to burn this plant community and we'll get to see the effects of the fire on germination of grassland flora.

The Institute for Rural Futures has two new publications worth looking at, on managing weeds on small farms and a best practice guide for fireweed (details for these in this edition).

Look out for the promised woodlot article in the next newsletter and have a great couple of spring months until then.
Ali



Bob Harris' waterbug survey at CMN workshop

What is the CMN?

The Far South Coast Conservation Management Network (CMN) supports landholders in the Bega Valley Shire to manage native vegetation on their property and caters to all land holders and vegetation types.

The CMN is funded and supported in various ways by the Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority, Department of Environment and Climate Change and Bega Valley Shire Council.

These agencies are working with landholders to protect native vegetation on private as well as public land.

The CMN's role is to provide motivation, knowledge and skills support to landholders to ensure ongoing management and care is worthwhile for the landholder and the environment.



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Prior to surveying the Bundian Way, considerable consultation and historical research was undertaken. This took into account historical writings and maps, as well as stories, oral history and surveyors' scarred trees and journals.



Aunty May, Teneille Stewart, Brooke Mongta, Markita Manton, and Jolene Brindle prepare for a survey at the Bondi Springs yamfields

The survey of the route started in October 2010, with up to five Koori personnel at a time walking different sections of the 335km length of the Bundian Way in legs of up to 8 days. Many parts, especially those in the wilderness areas, had to be visited again and again to clarify details and establish the old pathway route.



Photo: Aleks Terauds

Our last newsletter heralded the arrival of threatened Swift Parrots, feeding in small numbers on the blossoms of our coastal spotted gum forests. Since then there has been a positive inundation of these beautiful birds, as Barbara Jones from Far South Coast Birdwatchers tells us in her winter update.

Travelling Stock Reserves form an important part of the Bundian Way. Across the Monaro watered campsites about twelve km apart were used by the old Aboriginal people. The bullockies and travellers also found they made excellent campsites and from the 1870s many were made Crown Land reserves, now known as Travelling Stock Reserves (TSRs). Artefacts and other indications demonstrate the earlier occupation.

The survey team recorded a large range of artefacts along the entire route, as well as scarred trees and very substantial yamfields (including yam plants like Early Nancy, Vanilla Lily and Diuris or Donkey Orchid) which provided an important food source for people making their way to and from the moth ceremonies. Due to the regularity and quantity of evidence it became clear that the Bundian Way should be regarded as a single site, one very large continuous place, rather than a number of individual sites.



Photo: J Miles & M Campbell

Wurmbea dioica - early nancy

The information gathered through the survey will be maintained at the Monaroo-Bobberer-Gudu Keeping Place at Jigamy Farm near Eden and used for management and educational purposes. The plan is to provide cultural sharing through activities such as guided walks, talks and cultural camps.

For Further information and to download the survey report visit www.bundianway.com.au or contact John Blay, Bundian Way Project Officer for Eden Local Aboriginal Land Council at info@bundianway.com.au.

Swift Parrot Inundation

In the Bega Valley Shire we are getting small groups ranging from 5 to 30 birds calling in briefly. Bermagui, Beauty Point, Bithry Inlet, Gillards Beach, Kalaru, Wallagoot and Tura have been on the list.

However, the amazing news this season is that in the Bodalla State Forest members of the Eurobodalla Natural History Society have located about 1000 birds which represents half the entire population!

Some birds have already reached Tasmania in preparation for

breeding and the remainder will follow soon. Whether they stay in one spot for long or just hurry through will remain to be seen, so keep looking at any flocks of parrots over the next few weeks and report any Swift parrots sightings to Chris Tsaros at Birdlife Australia on chris.tzaros@birdlife.org.au.

For those who would like to buy a copy of *Looking at Birds on the Far South Coast NSW*, there are still some available. For details visit <http://thebegavalley.org.au/birdwatchers.html>

Wildlife Monitoring Workshop

by Alison Rodway

On a glorious Friday in May the CMN held a Wildlife Monitoring Workshop for landholders wanting to know what animals live on and visit their properties.

Monitoring wildlife is one way of measuring the impact that your activities are having on the landscape. For example, if you've planted a wildlife corridor to encourage the movement of fauna across your property, how do you know it is working? If you've made your plant community more diverse, how do you know what species you are now attracting?

The day was packed with activities and demonstrations, starting and finishing at the Bournda Environmental Education Centre (BEEC), with a visit to a beautiful Wallagoot Lake property next door and time for a chat and a great morning tea in between.



CMN members undertaking waterbug survey

or dam. For more information visit <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/waterwatch/macrobenthos/index.htm>

Olivia Forge and Cathy Thomas run the Potoroo Project in our coastal forests and came along to demonstrate some of the techniques they use. One of these was how to capture footage of animals using an infrared monitoring camera and a bait station (which can be borrowed from the CMN). Another simple technique was sand pad monitoring where animal tracks in a patch of prepared sand can be identified. The sand monitoring pad which they set out the day before the workshop had bandicoot, possum and wallaby prints on it by morning.



Steve Sass checking for reptiles under microhabitat structures made of bricks, tin, rocks and tiles, put in place at a CMN workshop four years ago.

Local ecologist Steve Sass shared his frog, reptile and bird monitoring experience, demonstrating the apps he uses, as well as the more familiar field guides. His bird watching walk to Cliff and Sayaka's bird haven revealed many species including endangered Swift Parrots, a pair of Royal Spoonbills and migrating Yellow-faced Honeyeaters.

Bob Harris from BEEC helped bring out the "inner child" in us as we gathered up our nets, plastic trays and identification sheets and fished around in the local dam for waterbugs. This simple, fun survey indicates the health of your stream, creek, wetland



Spring CMN Workshop: Managing Grassy Woodlands with Fire

Join Jackie Miles to discover how fire can breathe new life into grassy woodlands.

Date: Saturday morning, 27 October 2012

Place: Bemboka Cost: free

Bookings: Ali Rodway, info@fscmn.com.au

Setting up a sand monitoring pad

A sand monitoring pad is a simple technique for surveying reptiles and small mammals like potoroos, bandicoots, wallabies, possums and quolls. It can also be used to monitor fox and cat activity. Sand pads allow animals to leave identifiable tracks in an area of sand placed on a pathway through your forest.

One of the most important decisions to make is where to place your sand pad. Choose a vehicle track or walking path because animals frequent established tracks. Ideally the spot you choose on the path should have vegetation on either side that channels animals onto the sand pad. You may want to add a light brush barrier if the existing vegetation is not substantial.

The best sand to use is brick-layers' or 'fat' sand

which holds its form when you squeeze it in the palm of your hand. Source sand that is free of weeds.

Rake an area that crosses the full width of your track and at least one metre long to remove leaf litter and debris. Place sand over this area to a depth of around 1cm. Rake over with a leaf rake to create an "apple crumble" texture. If you flatten the pad or make it too smooth it creates a crust and prints are less likely to form. If the sand is too dry it will not leave distinct prints so you may need to wet it lightly with a sprayer before raking.

You may want to increase your chance of animals crossing the sand pad by placing a bait or lure at its centre. This could be a small cube of meat or a ball of universal bait (peanut butter,



Cath Thomas preparing sand pad on vehicle track



Potoroo prints



Grey Kangaroo prints

oats and sardines). Burying the bait about 50mm below the surface prevents birds such as ravens and currawongs from removing it and also provides some protection from ants.

Check for tracks the next day. Use a field guide to help with identification such as:

Triggs, Barbara. 1996. *Tracks, Scats and Other Traces: a field guide to Australian mammals*. Oxford University Press, Melbourne.



Seed Bank news

by Karen Walker, Coordinator, Far South Coast Seedbank



Slender wattle - *Acacia elongata*

No one could say that the forest in mid winter is dull when the cream and gold flowers of our acacias, such as slender wattle (*Acacia elongata*) begin to bloom.

As we head into spring, wattles can still be relied upon for colour and exuberance with the flowering of two common locals, *Acacia mearnsii* (black wattle) and *Acacia melanoxylon* (blackwood),

though they have to compete with all our other spring dazzlers.

Hints of spring are present right now in the prolific creamy-lime buds of *Clematis aristata* (old mans' beard), rusty red pea



Dusky coral pea - *Kennedia rubicunda*

flowers on *Kennedia rubicunda* (dusky coral-pea), early sprays of purple on *Hardenbergia violacea* (false sarsaparilla), the odd little pink-purple flower on erect flower spikes of *Indigofera australis* (austral indigo).

Another "underdog" of our local flora is *Hymenanthera dentata* (tree violet/whitethorn) which has changed its botanic name to *Melicytus dentata*. This prickly plant has the same undeserved reputation as native blackthorn, but have a close look right now and there are probably rows of dainty lemon yellow bell flowers with upcurled petals plus a fragrance most people would not even guess at: it is in the violet family!



Tree violet - *Melicytus dentata*

Photos: Karen Walker

Fireweed Strategy

have your say

Fireweed was recently announced as one of 12 new Weeds of National Significance (WoNS) due to its economic, environmental and social impacts, as well as its potential to spread.

NSW Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI) is asking the community to have their say on the draft National Strategy for Fireweed, a serious pasture weed of eastern Australia.

The draft strategy is now



available for public comment until September 14th 2012 and can be found at www.weeds.org.au/WoNS/fireweed. A summary of key themes in the strategy can also be found on this web page.

For further information please contact Bronwen Wicks on 02 4828 6632 or by email: bronwen.wicks@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Fireweed Best Practice Management Guide now available:

The final version of *Fireweed: A Best Practice Management Guide for Australian Landholders* has just been published by the Institute for Rural Futures at the University of New England.

Please visit the link below to download your free copy of this publication:

<http://www.ruralfutures.une.edu.au/fireweed/publications.htm>



Bemboka Landcare Group

by Judith Pearce



Bemboka Landcare Group has been caring for the area's 30,000 hectares of natural and agricultural landscapes since 1996. Initially focused on noxious weed control on private properties, the focus has broadened in recent years to the repair of riparian reserve areas.

Early this year, with the help of the Far South Coast Landcare Association, the group received a Community Action Grant to preserve and restore the Bemboka River Reserve, 40 acres of Crown land between Colombo Creek, the Bemboka River and the cemetery. This reserve is a significant example of "Lowland Grassy Woodland in the South East Corner Bioregion", an ecological community listed as in danger of becoming extinct under the *Threatened Species Conservation Act* in NSW.



Photos: Judith Pearce

Jackie Miles with Andrew Morrison from Bega Valley Shire Council setting up photo points for monitoring the outcomes of the burnoff



The grant is being used over 18 months to develop a 10 year management plan for the reserve, implement a community education program, and target on-ground works identified as priorities. Jackie Miles, who developed a draft management plan for the reserve in 2003, has been engaged as the project's consultant botanist.

With fewer than 600 people in the Bemboka locality, volunteers are spread thin across a range of community activities. Jackie's main strategy for sustainable long-term management of the reserve has thus been to set a baseline for weed control through targeted spraying and a planned late winter burnoff. This will be filmed for educational purposes and followed up by a CMN workshop in late spring, looking at the effects of the burn on this plant community.

The primary school is being involved in revegetation activities to engender community pride in and ownership of the reserve, and the Far South Coast Birdwatchers group also has an interest in outcomes of the project, since this is a favourite spot for visits.

For information or to get involved, visit our website: <http://bembokalandcare.wordpress.com>